

## NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER'S MEETING ON NACS IN HAITI

October 9 – 11, 2012, Port-au-Prince, Haïti

### Background

Haiti has one of the highest rates of undernutrition among women and children in the Americas. Based on the 2006 Demographic and Health Survey, 29.4% of Haitian children under the age of five were stunted, 9% were wasted and 18.1% were underweight.<sup>i</sup> Haiti also has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the Americas. HIV/AIDS affects 2.2% of the Haitian adult population between 15 and 49 years.<sup>ii</sup>

Nutrition and HIV are intimately linked. Nutritional care and support should be an integral part of the program; however, nutrition services have not been systematically introduced in nutrition and HIV services in Haiti.

### Defining “NACS”

Nutrition assessment, counseling and support (NACS) is an approach that aims to improve the nutritional status of individuals and populations by integrating nutrition into health policies, programs, and institutions providing health services. The different components of NACS mutually reinforce and complement each other to improve health outcomes. NACS not only strengthens the capacity of providers at both the institutional and community levels, it also strengthens the whole health system by establishing supervision protocols for monitoring, for product management, and improving client flow and support. It is an approach that serves the individual throughout its life cycle.

The *Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population* (MSPP; Haiti's MOH) and the U.S.

Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Haiti, through the Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) and FANTA-III projects, have committed to strengthening NACS at the national, departmental, facility and community level in Haiti.

### Stakeholder's Meeting

The SPRING Project and the MSPP, along with other USAID partners, organized a national stakeholder's meeting to determine how nutrition could be better integrated into health services in Haiti using the NACS approach.



*Workshop participants gathered for a group photo at the close of the meeting.*

The specific objectives of the meeting were to share the findings of the SPRING/Haiti assessment and make recommendations for using the NACS approach in Haiti. The workshop was attended by a wide range of stakeholders from the MSPP, national and international participants, and local NGOs; there were 79 participants in total.

Topics related to the various health systems strengthening and community components of the NACS approach were discussed through various presentations. Rich with information, these subjects caught the participants' interest and raised many questions in the panel discussions. These topics were:

- Haiti nutrition situation
- Overview of the NACS approach
- Quality improvement of NACS services
- Partnership for HIV-free survival using the NACS platform to support prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV & nutritionally vulnerable
- Scientific evidence supporting the NACS approach and the sharing of experiences
- *Manman ak Timoun Ansante* initiative
- Presentation by SPRING/Haiti on the NACS assessment findings
- Overview of human resources in Haiti
- Capacity building to implement NACS
- Quality improvement in the Haitian context
- Integrated management of acute malnutrition services at the health facility and community level
- Supplementary feeding of infants and adults in Haiti
- Community facility linkages
- Linking health facility clients with livelihood programs in the community
- Overview of the HMIS System in Haiti
- NACS indicators and their integration into the HMIS system



Closing remarks were given by Dr. Desinor (USAID), Dr. Lerebours (SPRING) and Dr. Marh ne (MSPP).

## The Way Forward

After three days of rich discussion, a national work plan to roll-out NACS was drafted and shared with all participants. A core working group was formed, including members of the MSPP, projects and donors, to review and finalize the draft. Once the work plan has been finalized by the working group, it will be sent to the Minister of Health and Director General of the Nutrition Directorate. Participants expressed the hope that the work plan will be implemented in such a way as to strengthen the national nutrition strategy.



Participants divided into small groups to draft a national strategy for NACS.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Gerald Lerebours  
 SPRING/Haiti Country Manager  
[glerebours@spring-nutrition.org](mailto:glerebours@spring-nutrition.org)

or visit the SPRING website:  
[www.spring-nutrition.org](http://www.spring-nutrition.org)

<sup>i</sup> DHS (2006). *2005-2006 Survey*. Retrieved from [http://www.measuredhs.com/Where-We-Work/Country-Main.cfm?ctry\\_id=16&c=Haiti](http://www.measuredhs.com/Where-We-Work/Country-Main.cfm?ctry_id=16&c=Haiti).

<sup>ii</sup> USAID (2012), *Global Health*, Retrieved from: <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/latin-american-and-caribbean/haiti/global-health>.